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ABSTRACT

Comprised of two separate booklets, this resource unit assists elementary teachers in explaining how the Ojibwe people harvest maple sugar and wild rice. The first booklet explains the procedure of tapping the maple trees for sap, preparation for boiling the sap, and the three forms the sugar is made into (granulated, "molded," and "taffy"). The second booklet describes the important event of the year--harvesting and processing wild rice. Processing involves four steps: drying, parching, threshing, and winnowing. Each of the booklets include historical photographs to show the step-by-step techniques of harvest. For the teacher both resources provide learning objectives, directions for activities, student discussion sheets, vocabulary lists, a list of resource materials, and an evaluation checklist. In addition there are recipes for maple sugar and wild rice and directions for making a muhkuk syrup container. (ERB/LFL)

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Maple Sugar Harvesting/

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Minneapolis Public Schools
Indian Elementary Curriculum Project

June 1979

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MAPLE SUGAR HARVESTING

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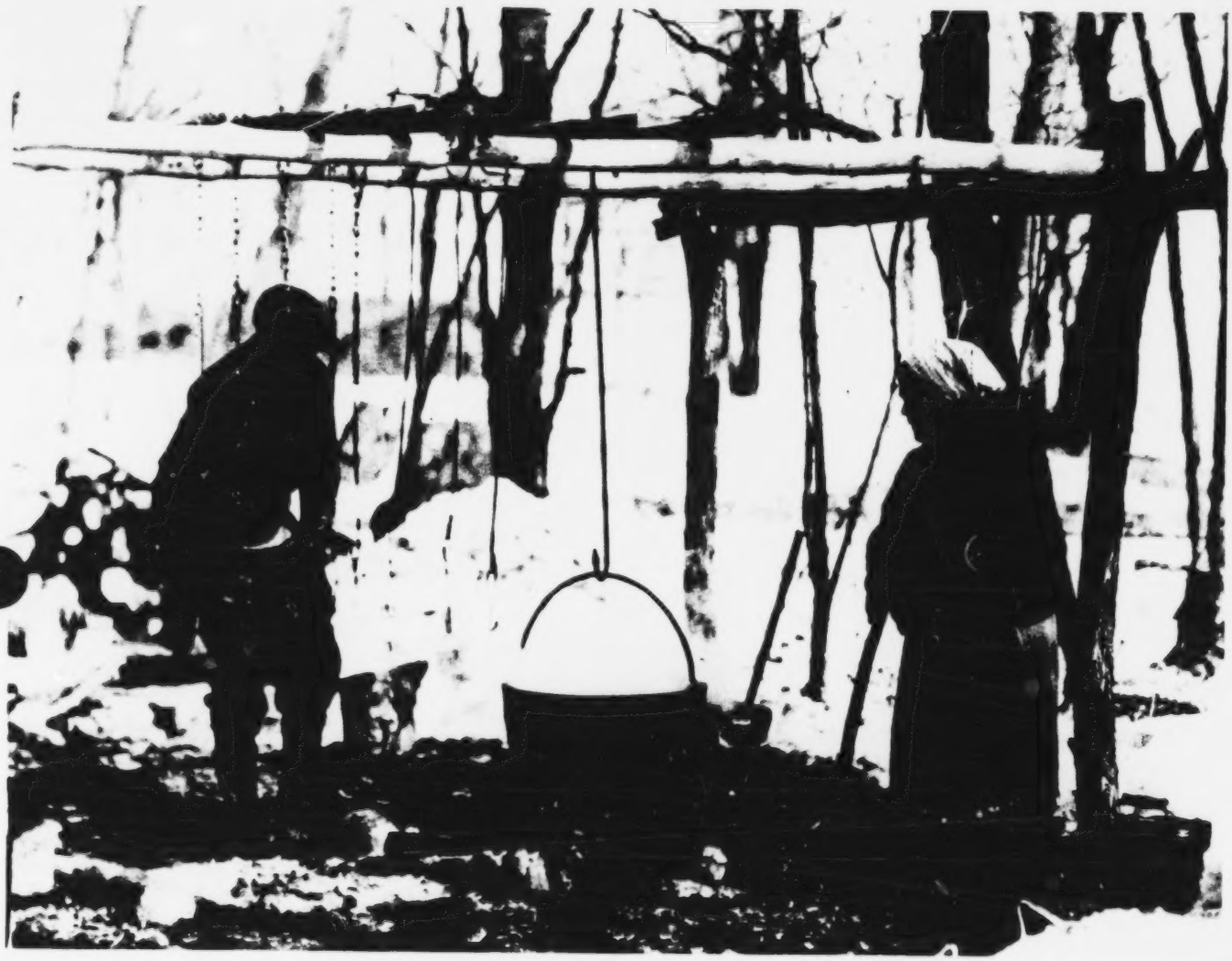

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Sisibakwat 1

Introduction 2

I. Objectives 10
II. Materials Needed 10
III. Directions and Procedures for Teachers 10
IV. Concepts and Vocabulary 11
V. Activity Variations 12
VI. Evaluation 12
VII Resources 13

Discussion Sheet One: Maple Tree 15

Discussion Sheet Two: Tapping the Maple Tree 17

Discussion Sheet Three: Boiling the Maple Sap 19

Discussion Sheet Four: "Sugaring Off" 21

Discussion Sheet Five: Granulating the Sugar 23

Recipes 25

Activity Sheet One: Making a Muhkuk 26

SISIBAKWAT

Sitting on Nokomis' knees
The winter winds waft
Thru leaveless trees
Inside was no draft.

An aroma of knickinick
Fills the stilled air
Flames stirred by a kick
Leaping shadows flair.

She tells of budding leaves
As the maple sap flows
Flowing thru wooden sieves
A southern wind blows.

She tells of the cooking
Lasting many, many hours
She tells of the tasting
Of what was to be ours.

She gives me rock candy
Awake are tastebuds deep
I dream of many a candy
Sisibakwat is in my sleep.

A.J. Nickaboine

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MAPLE SUGAR HARVESTING

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, maple sugar was an important food staple to the Ojibwe and other woodland tribes. It was the main sugar available until trading introduced other types. In the early spring, when snow was still on the ground, families packed their belongings and headed for the sugarbush. The sugarbush or maple grove is the area of the woods where maple trees are tapped. The families carried their belongings on sleds or toboggans and used snowshoes to ease travel through the snow.

Photograph Courtesy of: Minnesota Historical Society

Often groups of relatives or friends would stake off a portion of the sugarbush. In this section they usually had two lodges they maintained year after year. One small birch bark lodge was left intact and used as a storage shelter for the supplies. The frame of a larger lodge was left intact but covered with new bark each year. Platforms were built and placed inside the larger lodge for sleeping. A fire could be built either inside or outside the larger lodge.

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The sugar maple tree, sometimes called ck or hard maple, is one of over a hundred types of maple trees. It is the most valuable of the maple trees because of its sweet sap and its hard wood, which is often used to construct furniture and other items. The sugar maple tree grows from Newfoundland to the Great Lakes, south to Georgia, and west to Texas. It is usually between 70 and 135 feet in height. Its trunk may reach a diameter of five feet. The sugar maple tree has smooth gray bark when it is young, but as it gets older, the bark becomes rough. Its dark green leaves are thin and broad, and are cut into three or five points or lobes. The fruits of the sugar maple tree are winged seeds which are also called "keys." In autumn, the leaves turn beautiful shades of yellow, orange and red.

The maple leaf is the national emblem of Canada and it appears on the Canadian flag. The maple tree is the state tree of New York, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

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Photograph Courtesy of: Minnesota Historical Society

Maple sugar harvesting was started by tapping the maple trees for sap. Carved wooden pegs with grooves down the center and sharp, pointed ends were tapped into the maple trees at slight downward angles about three feet from the ground. The sap flowed along the grooved peg into a birch bark container called a *muhkuk* by the Ojibwe. The container was either hung on the peg or placed on the ground. Containers ranged in size from very small to those holding twenty or more pounds. When the weather was cold, the sap did not run during the night. Therefore, the sap was usually collected in the late afternoons after it had stopped running, and poured into larger birch bark pails. The empty *muhkuk* was again placed to catch more sap. There were often two or three taps to a large tree. The average number of taps was 900, while the larger camps had from 1,200 to 2,000 taps.[1]

[1]Frances Densmore, *How Indians Use Wild Plants for Foods, Medicine and Crafts* (Reprint: New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1974), p. 309.

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At the maple sugar camp, preparations were made to begin boiling the sap. The large birch bark containers filled with sap were supported by strips of green bark and suspended over the fire. The fire was kept burning all night while people took turns watching the boiling kettles. According to Frances Densmore, a branch of spruce attached to a stick was dipped into the kettle, as this made the boiling subside. When the sap had boiled for a while, it became slightly thickened and was then called syrup. The syrup was strained to remove any impurities. In the past, the straining was often done through a mat woven with narrow strips of basswood bark. This mat was placed over an extra kettle and the syrup was strained through it, using large wooden spoons to dip into the kettle. When other materials were introduced, iron kettles were used for boiling the sap; chains and iron hooks replaced the strips of green bark; and burlap or another cloth was used for straining.

Photograph Courtesy of: Minnesota Historical Society

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After the syrup was strained, it was returned to the kettles for "sugaring off."[2] Usually, however, sugaring off was done on a stormy day or when the sap boiling was completed. The sugaring off was done by replacing the boiled, strained syrup into thoroughly cleaned kettles and slowly heating it. When it became thick, small pieces of deer tallow were added. This was said to make the sugar soft rather than brittle. A paddle was used to stir the syrup, which was transferred to a wooden trough where it thickened to the right consistency. In the trough, it was stirred again with a paddle. When it reached the desired consistency, a granulating ladle or the hands were used to work it. This had to be done quickly before the sugar cooled too much. From the trough, the warm granulated sugar was poured into birch bark containers.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 312.

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According to Densmore, the sap was boiled into syrup and prepared in three forms. The most common form was the grained or granulated sugar. The second form was the "molded" sugar which was packed in birch bark cones, dishes, or in duck bills. These molds were greased before the maple sugar was added to them so that the cakes could be easily taken out. The molds were made in the shapes of various animals, flowers, people, and the moon and stars. The third form was a sticky gum or "taffy." This was placed in small folded birch bark packets. People frequently used the granulated sugar and the molded sugar cakes as gifts.

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The maple sugar gathering usually lasted from two to four weeks, until the sap was too thin and bitter to make sugar. The first sap run was considered the best. Rain was said to provide a change in the taste of the sap.

Maple sugar was used in the diet primarily as a seasoning for vegetables, cereals, fish, meats, and wild rice; as a delicacy by itself; and, as a beverage when dissolved in water. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, one pound of maple sugar contains 1,579 calories and the following nutrients:[3]

Carbohydrates	408	grams
Calcium	649	milligrams
Phosphorus	50	milligrams
Iron	6.4	milligrams
Potassium	1,098	milligrams
Sodium	65	milligrams

Presently, maple trees are still tapped by many Ojibwe people. However, changes have occurred in some of the activities surrounding the maple sugar harvest. For example, the birch bark *muhkuk* has been largely replaced by iron kettles, syrup pails, and other containers. With the use of automobiles, many people drive between their homes and the maple groves; whereas, in the past, they lived at the sugarbush until the harvest ended for the year. The birch bark dwellings have been replaced by contemporary dwellings, or by tents and campers when maple sugar gatherers choose to stay at the camp. Presently, maple sugar gathering may not include all family members as it did in the past. Another change is that maple sugar is no longer a diet staple, although it is still gathered and enjoyed by many people.

[3]Bernice K. Watt and Annabel L. Merrill, *Composition of Foods*, Agricultural Handbook No. 8 (Reprint: Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, 1975), p. 115.

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I. OBJECTIVES

Given the introduction:

A. The students will correctly state that maple syrup was an important food staple to the Ojibwe and other woodland tribes.

B. The students will correctly describe characteristics of the sugar maple tree.

C. The students will accurately identify the Ojibwe word for a birch bark container used in maple sugar harvesting.

D. The students will accurately describe how maple syrup is harvested.

E. The students will correctly describe the three forms of maple sugar identified by Frances Densmore.

F. The students will compare and contrast past and present maple sugar harvesting.

II. MATERIALS NEEDED

A. Discussion sheets, duplicated for each student.

B. Activity: Making a Muhkuk

C. Film: *Sisibakwat: The Ojibwe Maple Harvest.*

III. DIRECTIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR TEACHERS

A. Discuss the introduction with the students, emphasizing the following:

1. Maple sugar was a food staple of the Ojibwe and other woodland tribes.

2. Characteristics of the sugar maple tree: it is sometimes called rock or hard maple; it is one of a hundred types of maple trees; it may reach a height of 70 to 135 feet; its trunk may grow to five feet across; it has smooth gray bark when it is young and it provides sap from which maple sugar is made.

3. The description of maple sugar gathering and processing (tapping, boiling, straining and sugaring off).

4. The forms sap can take as it is processed (syrup, grained sugar, molded sugar and taffy).

5. Descriptions of past and present sugarbush camps.

B. Where available, show the film: *Sisibakwat: The Ojibwe Maple Harvest.*

C. Distribute discussion sheets to each student as maple sugar harvesting is discussed. Discuss the questions provided on the back of each sheet with the students.

D. Have the students complete the activity, "Making a Muhkuk."

E. Have the students write poems about maple sugar harvesting after reading *Sisibakwat.*

IV. CONCEPTS AND VOCABULARY

A. Birch bark — the outer covering of white birch trees, used by many woodland tribes to make essential items.

B. Container — anything that contains or can contain something, such as a carton, box, crate or can.

C. Maple sugar — a yellowish-brown sugar produced by boiling down maple syrup.

D. Maple syrup — a syrup produced by partially boiling down the sap of the sugar maple.

E. *Muhkuk* (muh kuk) — an Ojibwe word meaning "container." The plural form of the word is *muhkukoon* (muh kuk koon).

F. Ojibwe (o jib wa) — a North American tribe of Indian people also known as Chippewa; or, in their own language, as *Anishinabe* (*Anishinabe, s., Anishinabayg, pl.*). For more information about the Ojibwe, see Section VII, Resources.

G. *Sisibakwat* (see zee bah kwat) — an Ojibwe word meaning "sugar."

H. Staple — a basic or necessary item of food.

I. Sugarbush — an orchard or grove of sugar maples.

J. Sugaring off — an expression used to describe the process of making sugar from boiled, strained sap.

K. Sugar maple tree — one of over a hundred types of maple trees, also called rock or hard maple. It yields a sweet sap which can be made into maple sugar.

L. Tallow — the fatty tissue or suet of animals.

M. Tapping — to draw liquid sap from a sugar maple tree by placing or "tapping" carved wooden pegs, with grooves down the center, into the trees at slight downward angles.

N. Trough — a long, narrow, open container.

V. ACTIVITY VARIATIONS

A. Have the students create a mural of a maple sugar camp.

B. Have the students read and/or write stories about maple sugar.

C. Have the students construct a diorama depicting traditional and modern maple sugar camps.

D. Have the students read the story, *Shemay: The Bird in the Sugarbush*, by David Martinson, and others about maple sugar. See Section VII, Resources, for references to consult.

E. Have the students identify food staples of today.

VII. EVALUATION

A. Did the students state that maple sugar was an important food staple to the Ojibwe and other woodland tribes?

B. Did the students correctly describe characteristics of the sugar maple tree?

C. Did the students identify the Ojibwe word for a birch bark container?

D. Did the students accurately describe how maple sugar is harvested?

E. Did the students correctly describe the three forms of maple sugar identified by Frances Densmore?

F. Did the students compare and contrast past and present maple sugar harvesting?

VII. RESOURCES

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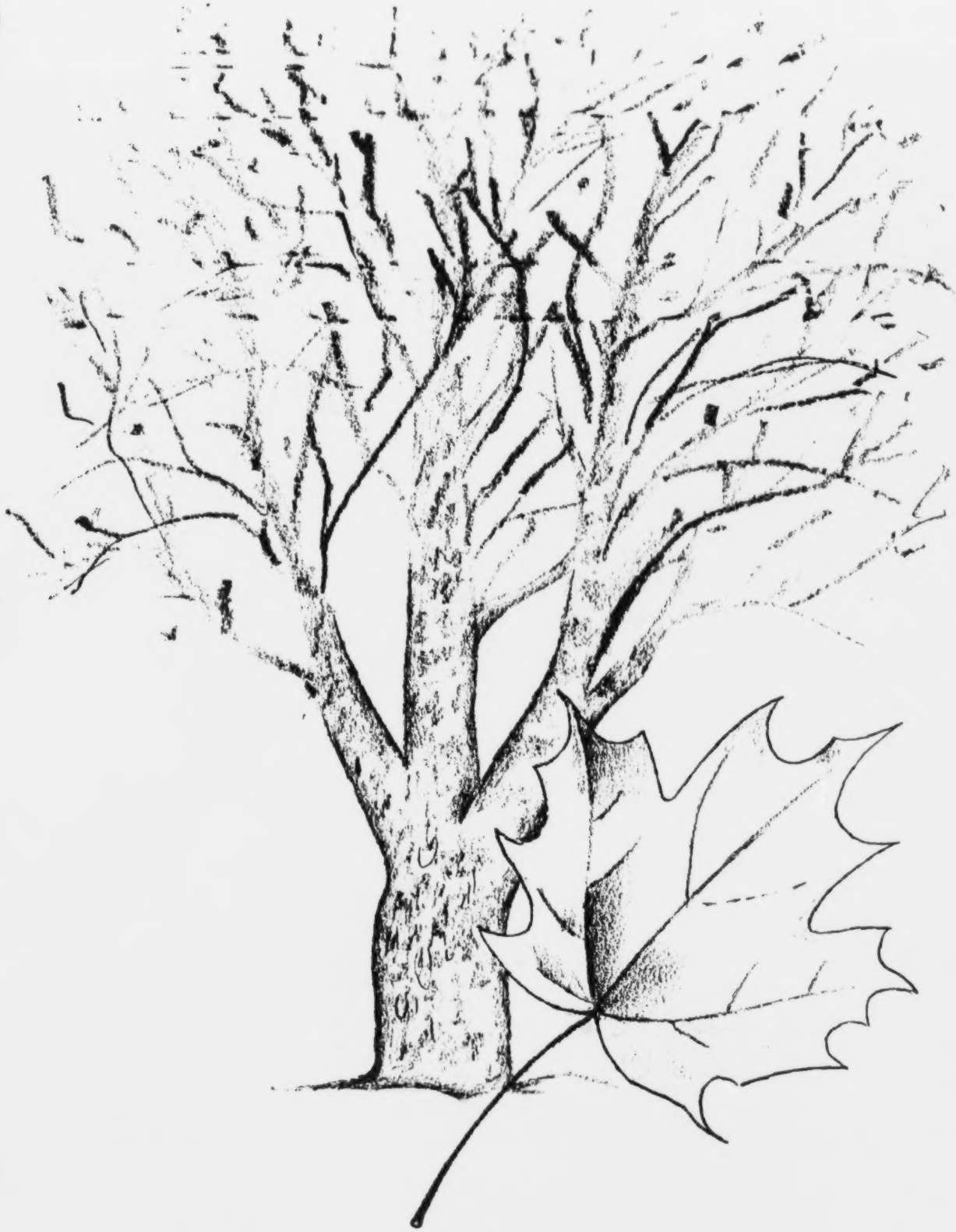
DISCUSSION SHEET ONE: MAPLE TREE



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DISCUSSION SHEET ONE: MAPLE TREE

Suggested Discussion Questions:

1. Describe some characteristics of the maple tree?

2. What are "keys?"

3. Why is the maple tree valuable?

DISCUSSION SHEET TWO: TAPPING THE MAPLE TREE

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DISCUSSION SHEET TWO: TAPPING THE MAPLE TREE

Suggested Discussion Questions:

1. Describe how maple trees were tapped.

2. What is the Ojibwe word that means container?

3. How many people would you need in your camp to collect the sap from 900 taps?

4. How often would you check the pails and empty them?

DISCUSSION SHEET THREE: BOILING THE MAPLE SAP

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DISCUSSION SHEET THREE: BOILING THE MAPLE SAP

Suggested Discussion Questions:

1. Describe what the person in the illustration is doing.

2. Why is the maple sap boiled?

3. Why is the syrup strained?

4. How long do you think you could watch the fire and stir the boiling sap?

DISCUSSION SHEET FOUR: "SUGARING OFF"

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DISCUSSION SHEET FOUR: "SUGARING OFF"

Suggested Discussion Questions:

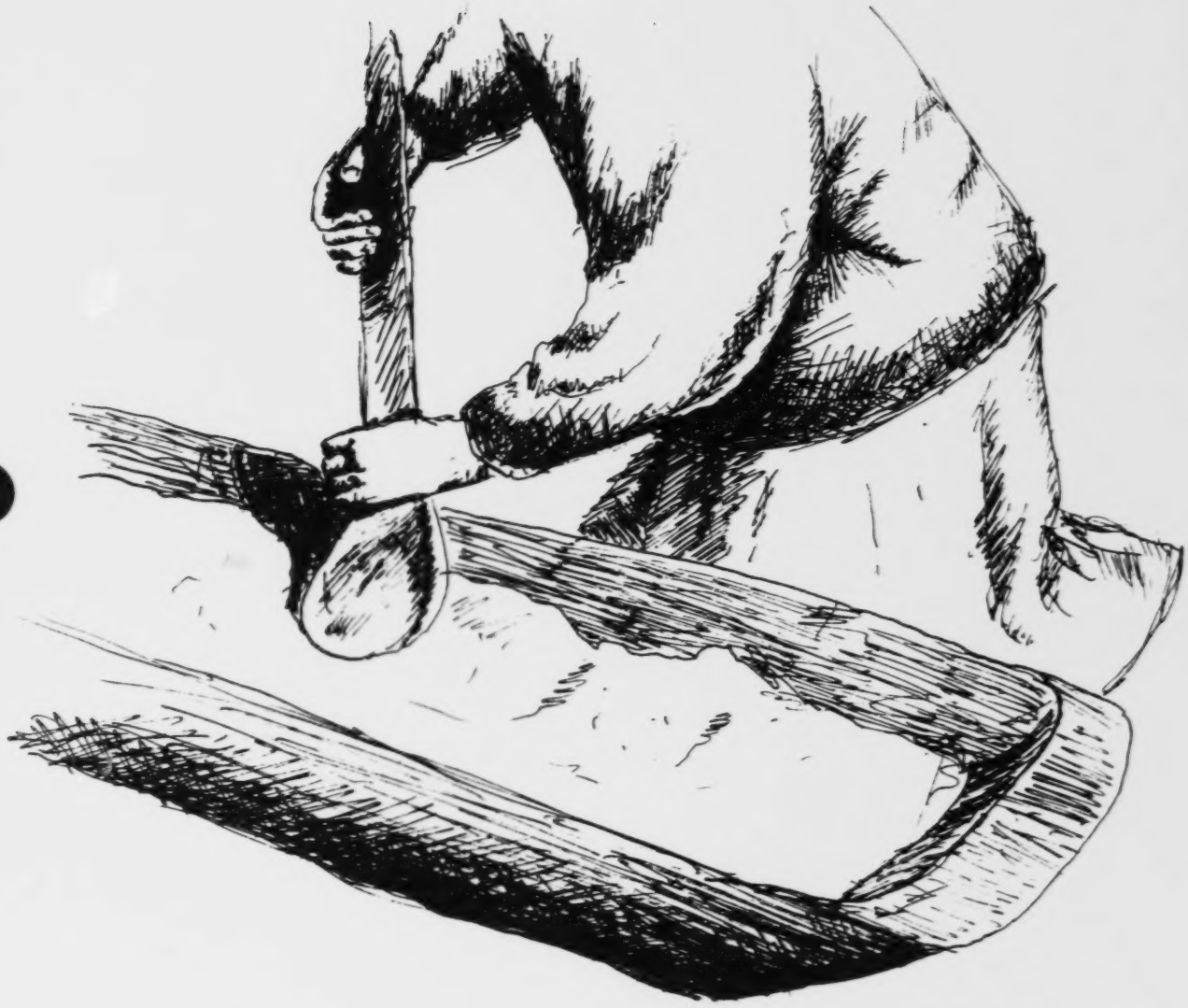
1. Describe "sugaring off."

2. What is deer tallow?

3. Why was deer tallow used?

4. How do you think the person knows when the syrup is thick enough to remove from the fire?

DISCUSSION SHEET FIVE: GRANULATING THE SUGAR



29

Drawing by Alan Premo

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DISCUSSION SHEET FIVE: GRANULATING THE SUGAR

Suggested Discussion Questions:

1. Describe what the person in the illustration is doing.

2. What is the difference between syrup and granulated sugar?

3. How would you use maple sugar?

4. How would you use maple syrup?

RECIPES

Maple Fudge

2 cups of maple syrup
3/4 cup of milk
3/4 cup of nut meats

Boil syrup and milk in 2 quart saucepan to soft ball or 238°F. Cool to lukewarm (about 110°), then beat until gloss disappears. Quickly stir in nut meats and pour into 8 x 8 square buttered pan.

Popcorn Balls

6 cups of popped corn
1-1/2 cups of maple syrup
1/4 tsp. cream of tartar
1 T. butter

In a 2 quart saucepan on low heat, boil maple syrup and cream of tartar to 265°F. Add a tablespoon of butter then pour mixture over popped corn. Stir gently with a wooden spoon until coated. When popcorn is cool enough to handle, press popcorn into balls using lightly buttered hands. Makes approximately 9 to 10 balls.

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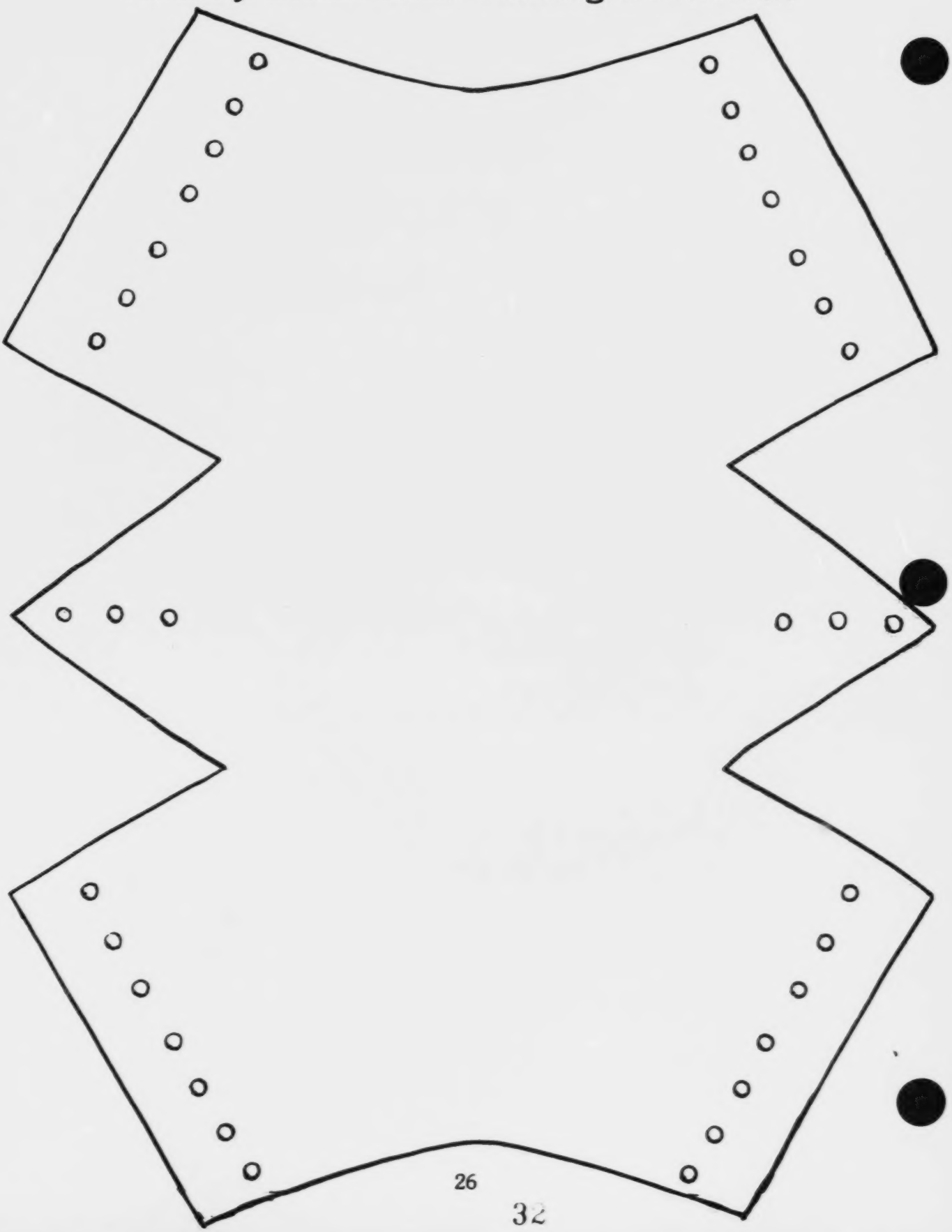
Activity Sheet One: Making a Muhkuk



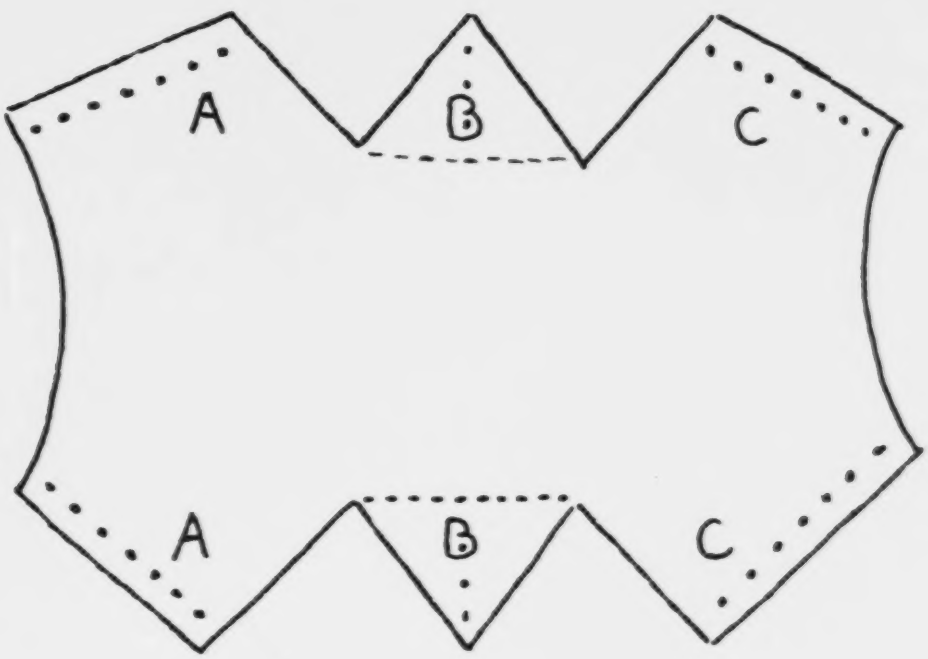
Directions for Making a Muhkuk*

MATERIALS NEEDED:

1. Birch bark or tagboard for each student.
2. Leather or paper punch.
3. Yarn, two 10" pieces for each student.

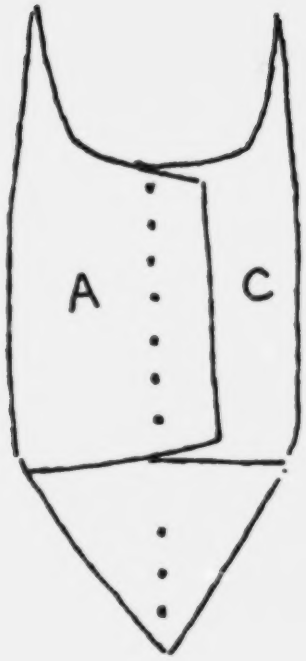
DIRECTIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR TEACHERS:

1. Duplicate the pattern onto tagboard for each student.
2. If birch bark is used, trace the pattern onto bark, cut out, and punch holes where indicated.
3. Thread needle with a 10" piece of yarn and tie a knot at the end of the yarn.
4. Fold up flaps B on the dotted lines.

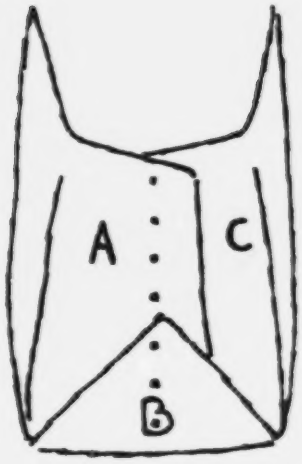


**Muhkuk* (muh kuk) — an Ojibwe word meaning "container."

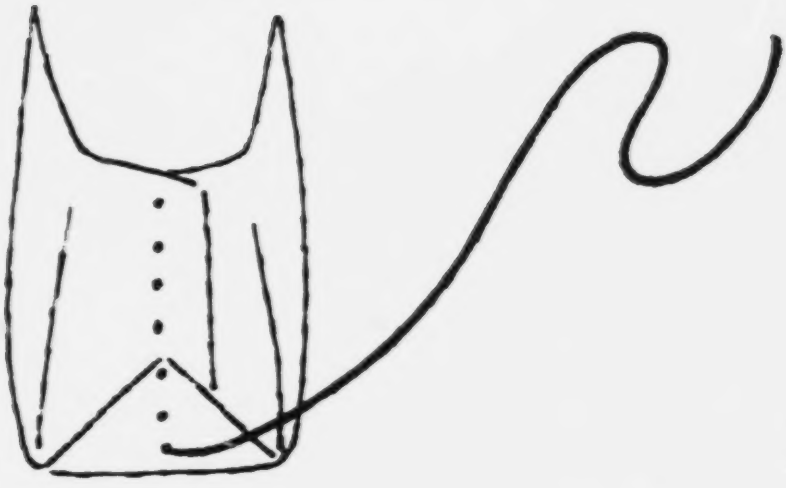
5. Fold flaps A and C together and match the corresponding holes.



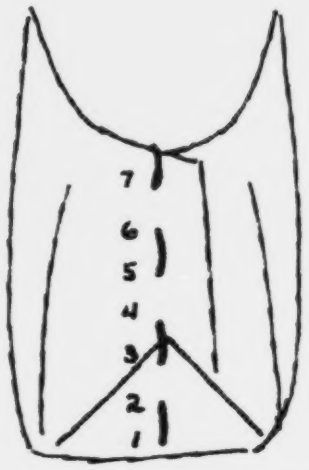
6. Flap B will be on the outside of flaps A and C. Match it with the corresponding holes of flaps A and C.



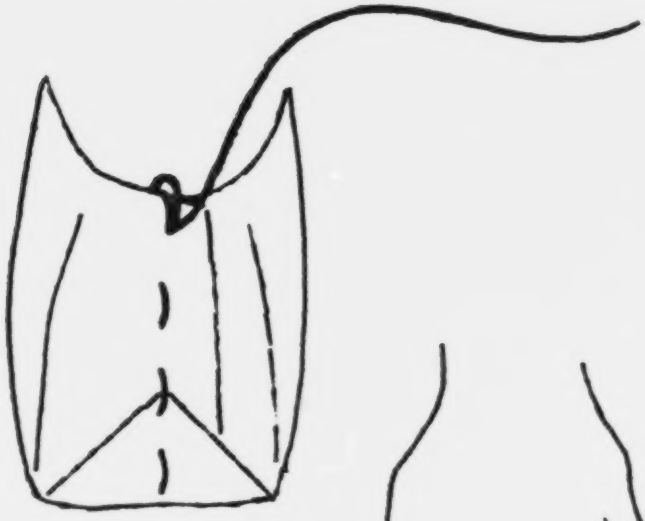
7. Starting from the inside of the mukuk, lace the yarn through the bottom corresponding holes.



8. Lace in and out through the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh holes in a running stitch.

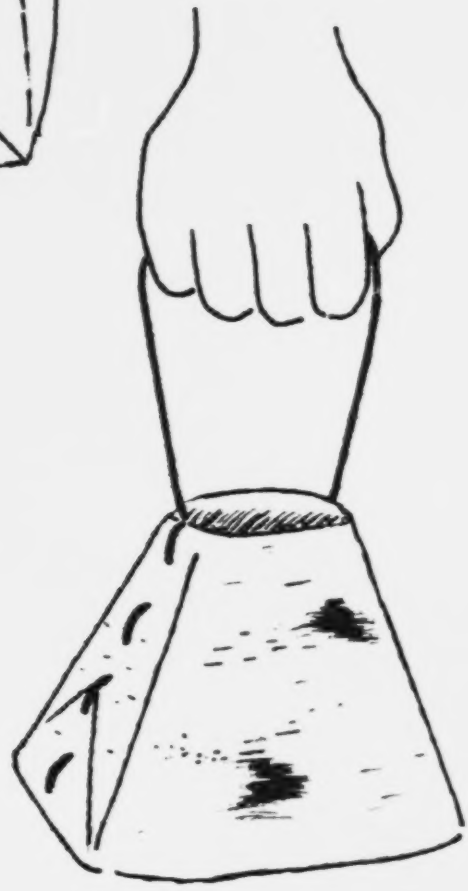


9. The mukuk can be reinforced by lacing over the top edge and back through the seventh hole. Do not cut or tie the remaining yarn as it will be used in step 11.

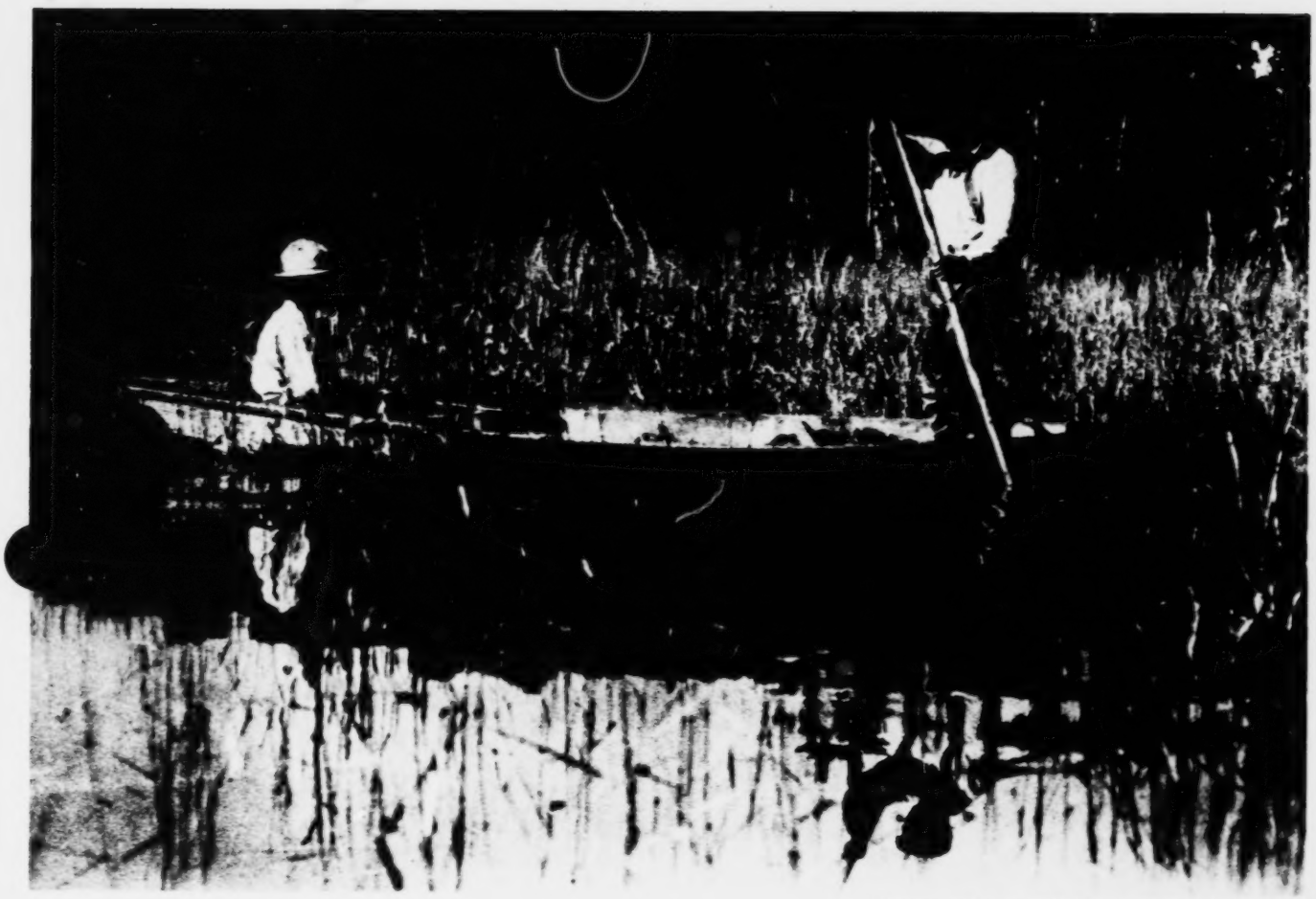


10. Repeat steps three through nine for the opposite side of the mukuk.

11. Make a handle using the excess yarn from step 9. Tie the two pieces of yarn on each side together at the top. Dark lines may be drawn on the tagboard so that it resembles birch bark.



WILD RICE HARVESTING



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MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

An Equal Opportunity School District

1979

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mahnomen 1

Introduction 2

I. Objectives 8
II. Materials Needed 8
III. Directions and Procedures for Teachers 9
IV. Concepts and Vocabulary 9
V. Activity Variations 11
VI. Evaluation 11
VII. Resources 12

Discussion Sheet One: Wild Rice 15

Discussion Sheet Two: Drying the Wild Rice 17

Discussion Sheet Three: Parching the Wild Rice 19

Discussion Sheet Four: Threshing the Wild Rice 21

Discussion Sheet Five: Winnowing the Wild Rice 23

Wild Rice Recipes 25

Mahnomen

Gentle chill, the late summer breeze
Wafting kindly through Mahnomen
Northern birds perching in the trees
It is time to harvest Mahnomen.

Anishinabe gather your canoe poles
Anishinabe gather your rice striker
Mahnomen to be gathered before the cold.
Anishinabe is mahnomen's harvester.

Rice sheaves bundled in red ribbon
Where gentle women's hands were before
In the canoe goes mahnomen
Ready to finish, ready to store.

Tis Gitchi Manido's gift, Mahnomen
Gitchi Manido blessed Anishinabe.
Aah! Mahnomen and Pemmican
A feast for Gitchi Manido's Anishinabe!

A.J. Nickaboine

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WILD RICE HARVESTING

INTRODUCTION

Photograph Courtesy of: Minnesota Historical Society

Wild rice is the edible grain of a tall aquatic grass. It is one of the most important foods to the Ojibwe and other woodland tribes. It has such importance that a tribe in Wisconsin, the Menominee, takes its name from the grain. The Ojibwe name for wild rice is *mahnomen*. Wild rice plants grow in shallow mud bottomed lakes, ponds, and streams, primarily in the Great Lakes region of the United States and Canada. Wild rice is harvested in the late summer or early fall.

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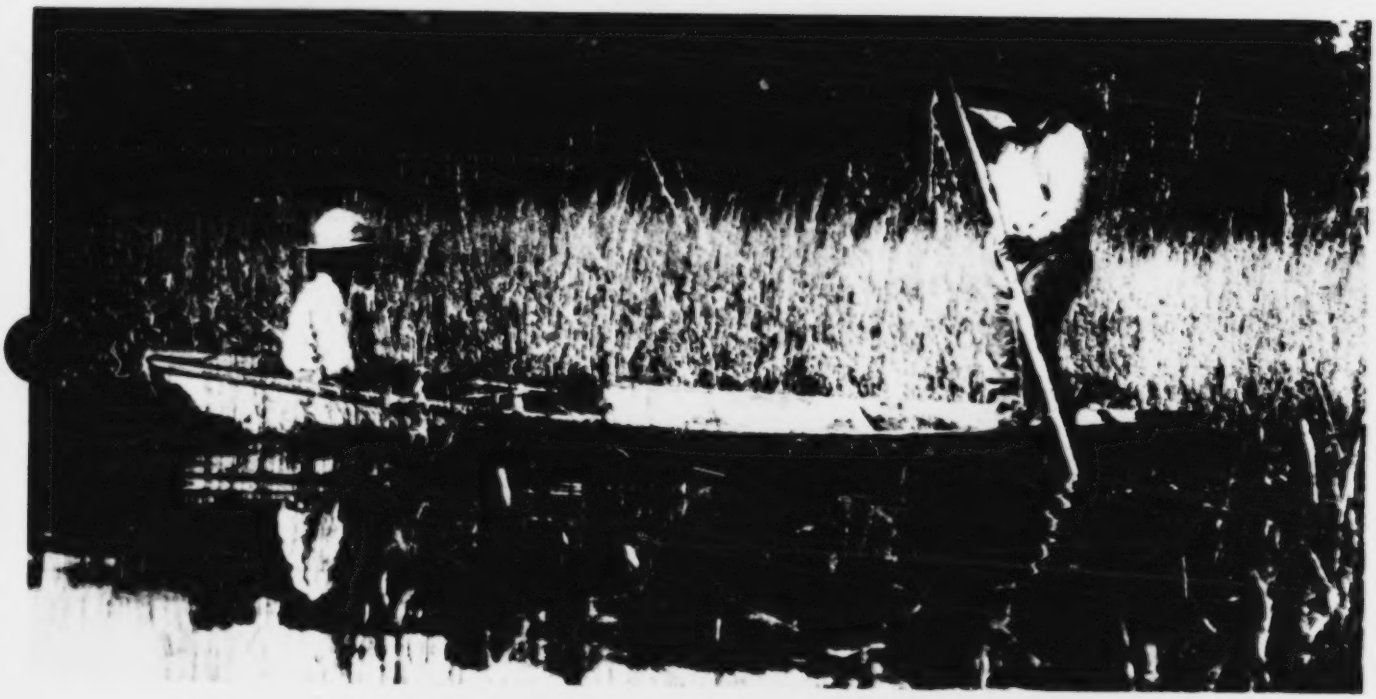
Traditionally, the harvesting of wild rice was an important event of the year. Families would camp around the lakes where wild rice grew. They used birch bark canoes to harvest the grain. Canoes are well suited for harvesting wild rice. They are lightweight, they do not injure the wild rice plants, and they are broad and deep enough to hold several hundred pounds of wild rice. Canoes are usually poled through the areas where wild rice plants grow, although wooden paddles are sometimes used. The pole used to propel a canoe is long and forked. It is often called a push pole. The forked end of the push pole is usually made of sumac while the rest of it is made of cedar or spruce. Two wild rice harvesters, "ricers," usually work together. One person poles or paddles the canoe, and the other ricer "knocks" the wild rice into the canoe. Using two tapered cedar sticks approximately 32 inches long, the ricer "knocks" or "pounds" the wild rice into the canoe. One stick is used to bend the wild rice stalk into the canoe, the other is used to knock the ripe grains loose from the stalk. The ricers criss-cross the wild rice areas of the lake until they are finished for the day.



Photograph Courtesy of: Minnesota Historical Society

The areas where wild rice plants grow are reseeded naturally. Ripe wild rice is knocked back into the lake by ricers, by the wind, and by ducks and other waterfowl. On each grain of wild rice there is a husk. The husk consists of a long pointed beard at one end and a spear at the other. When the grain of wild rice is knocked back into the water, the spear takes hold in the mud below. The grain lies dormant throughout the fall and winter. In the spring the sun warms the grain and the seed germinates. The wild rice plants grow to varying heights, depending upon water depth. By late summer the plants have developed their own grains which are ready for harvest. Wild rice plants do not all ripen at the same time. There are many seed grains at the head of the stalk ripening at different times and then falling into the water, rather than ripening all at once as in the case of domesticated grains. Some lakes or ponds are ready for harvesting before others. Therefore, certain rice lakes are harvested at varying times.

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Weather conditions are extremely important in determining whether or not there is a good wild rice harvest. Strong winds and/or heavy rainfall knock wild rice from the plants into the water and make paddling or poling difficult work. A hailstorm or strong wind can destroy an entire wild rice crop. The destruction of a crop can mean a loss of food and seasonal employment. Dry weather lowers the water level of lakes. If the water level is too low, a canoe may be difficult or impossible to maneuver through the wild rice. Thick mud at the bottom of a lake may also make poling difficult.

Photograph Courtesy of: Minnesota Historical Society

After wild rice has been harvested, it is processed or finished. Processing converts the harvested wild rice into a finished product, ready for storing or cooking. Processing involves the following steps: 1) drying, 2) parching, 3) threshing, and 4) winnowing. These steps are completed in the order given whether one is processing wild rice by hand or by machine. Methods of hand processing are described below. The first step, drying, is necessary to prevent molding or spoilage. Drying is usually done by spreading wild rice on sheets of canvas; on large mats; or, as in the past, on birch bark sheets. As the wild rice dries, it is frequently stirred to ensure even drying of the grains.

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Photograph Courtesy of: Minnesota Historical Society

Drying is continued in the next step, parching. Parching loosens the husks on the wild rice grains. In hand processing, parching is done in large cast iron kettles or in washtubs over a carefully regulated fire. The wild rice is stirred constantly with a canoe paddle until the husks are loosened. Parching removes much of the remaining moisture from the grains as well as partially cooking the rice.

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Threshing, usually referred to as "dancing" or "jigging," removes the loosened husks from the grain of wild rice. In a traditional hand processing method, holes were dug in the ground and lined with animal skins. The parched rice was then put into the holes and treaded on with a rhythmic movement of moccasined feet. Treading on the grains helped to dislodge the husk fragments. Parching and threshing are often done in late afternoon and evening when ricers return from the lakes. Processing is sometimes done by those who remain at home while the ricers are on the lakes harvesting wild rice.

Winnowing, or "fanning," the final processing step, frees grains from chaff and dirt. In the hand processing method, the wild rice is spread in a large birch bark tray or other container, then tossed in an even, steady motion up and down. Both threshing and winnowing need to be done repeatedly. Traditionally, people kept enough finished rice for their needs and often stored the rest for winter use. It was stored in sewn animal skins or birch bark containers and buried in caches until it was needed. Wild rice keeps indefinitely and is easy to carry around.

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Wild rice is still important to Ojibwe people, although it is no longer the food staple it was in the past. Hand processing methods of finishing wild rice are still used, but less frequently. These methods are sometimes combined with the use of hand constructed machines made with small engines. Or, "finishing" may be done entirely by machine at a wild rice processing plant. Because ricing is now a business enterprise, many companies or wild rice buyers machine process large quantities of wild rice. Aluminum canoes and wooden flat-bottomed boats have largely replaced birch bark canoes for use in gathering wild rice. In the past, wild rice was mainly harvested to meet family food needs. Presently, families might sell all or part of their harvest, thus using wild rice as a seasonal means of economic support. The wild rice is sold to buyers for eventual use in restaurants or sale in stores. Prices paid for wild rice vary according to locality or to supply and demand.

Since harvesting wild rice has become increasingly commercialized, such activities as canoe renting, wild rice buying and selling, and plant experimentation now prevail. Rules and regulations, enacted and administered by state and/or tribal governments, have been created. Regulations may include: requiring rice licenses of harvesters; specifying the number of hours, opening days, and dates lakes may be riced; determining the number and names of ricers for specific lakes; specifying the equipment that may or may not be used on lakes; and establishing penalties for regulation violators.

Indian people are thankful for wild rice and often express their gratitude at feasts and festivals, sharing the bounty of the harvest.

Wild rice can be prepared in a variety of ways. It is nutritious and can be used in hot dishes, dressings, soups, desserts, salads, as a breakfast cereal, or cooked plain. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, one pound of uncooked wild rice contains 1,602 calories and the following nutrients:

Protein	64.0	grams
Fat	3.2	grams
Carbohydrates	341.6	grams
Calcium	86	milligrams
Phosphorus	1,538	milligrams
Iron	19.1	milligrams
Sodium	32	milligrams
Potassium	998	milligrams
Thiamine	2.02	milligrams
Riboflavin	2.87	milligrams
Niacin	27.9	milligrams[1]

Wild rice recipes are provided in the unit in the event that cooking activities are used. See Section VIII, Resources, for further information about wild rice.

[1]Bernice K. Watt and Annabel L. Merrill, *Composition of Foods, Agriculture Handbook No. 8* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, reprinted, 1975), p. 121.

I. OBJECTIVES

Given the introduction:

A. The students will correctly identify fall as the time of the year when wild rice is harvested.

B. The students will accurately state that the Ojibwe word for wild rice is *mahnomen*.

C. The students will identify the Menominee as an Indian tribe whose name comes from the word for wild rice.

D. The students will correctly state that wild rice grows in shallow lakes and streams in the Great Lakes region in both the United States and Canada.

E. The students will correctly state that wild rice is processed by hand or by machine.

F. The students will correctly identify and describe the four steps in processing wild rice (drying, parching, threshing, and winnowing).

G. The students will compare and contrast past and present methods of harvesting wild rice (Past: hand processing; use of birch bark canoes; ricing time determined by weather and readiness of the rice; staple in the diet of the Ojibwe and other Indian people. Present: machine processing; use of aluminum canoes and flat-bottomed boats; state and tribal regulation of ricing hours with licenses required; buying and selling wild rice; wild rice is no longer a diet staple.).

H. The students will correctly state that Indian people are thankful for wild rice.

II. MATERIALS NEEDED

A. Discussion sheets, duplicated for each student.

B. A large sheet of paper for each small group.

C. Film: *Mahnomen: Harvest of the North*.

III. DIRECTIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR TEACHERS

A. Discuss the introduction with the students, emphasizing the following: wild rice is the edible grain of a tall aquatic grass; the Ojibwe word for wild rice; wild rice was a food staple of the Ojibwe and other woodland tribes; fall is the time of the year when wild rice is harvested; wild rice grows in shallow lakes and streams in the Great Lakes region; four steps in processing wild rice; past and present wild rice harvesting; nutritional value of wild rice; and that festivals and feasts are held to give thanks for wild rice.

B. Where available, show the film, *Mahnomen: Harvest of the North.*

C. Distribute discussion sheets to each student as each wild rice processing step is presented. Discuss the questions provided on the back of each sheet with the students.

D. Compare and contrast wild rice harvesting with other types of work (ricing is seasonal work; the income derived form ricing depends upon supply and demand; ricing requires certain equipment, such as a pole, knocking sticks and a canoe; ricing may require travel from one lake to another; licensing is required; it is work that is highly influenced by weather conditions).

E. Relate the growth and harvesting of wild rice to other growing things, such as vegetables, plants, and flowers).

F. Divide the students into six groups. Have each group draw one of the following scenes: ricing; drying; parching; threshing; winnowing and a feast.

G. If possible, obtain samples of wild rice from the green stage to the finished product. Compare and contrast wild rice with other types of rice.

IV. CONCEPTS AND VOCABULARY

A. Drying — to make dry; lose moisture. In processing wild rice, drying is done by spreading the rice on sheets of canvas or large mats in the sun. It is stirred frequently in order to have it dry evenly.

B. Festival — an occasion marked by feasting, ceremonies, and/or celebrating.

C. Hand processing — a manual method, as opposed to machine methods, of processing wild rice.

D. Harvesting — the gathering of crops.

E. Husk — the outside covering of a fruit or seed.

F. Knocking sticks — flails, generally made of cedar, 32" long and tapered at the ends. One is used for bending the rice stalks into the canoe and the other to "knock" or "pound" the kernels into the canoe.

G. *Mahnomen* (mah no min) — the Ojibwe word for "wild rice."

H. Menominee (me nom i nee) — a tribe of Indian people with a reservation in northeastern Wisconsin.

I. Ojibwe (o jib wa) — a North American tribe of Indian people also known as Chippewa; or, in their own language, as *Anishinabe (Anishinabe, s., Anishinabayg, pl.)*. For more information about the Ojibwe, see Section VII, Resources.

J. Parching — to dry by exposure to heat without burning; to toast or roast slightly. In hand processing of wild rice, the rice is stirred in a kettle over a carefully regulated fire until the husks are loosened.

K. Push pole — a large forked pole used to propel a canoe during wild rice harvesting.

L. Threshing — to separate the grain or seed from a cereal plant or the like. Threshing, usually referred to as "dancing" or "jigging," removes the loosened husks from the grains of wild rice.

M. Wild rice — the edible grain of a tall, aquatic grass which grows primarily in shallow water around the Great Lakes region in both the United States and Canada. The scientific name for wild rice is *zizania aquatica*.

N. Winnowing — to free grain from lighter particles of chaff and dirt especially by throwing it into the air and allowing the wind or a current of air to blow away the impurities. In a wild rice hand processing method, the rice kernels are spread in a large tray, basket, or other container and tossed lightly in the air.

V. ACTIVITY VARIATIONS

A. To use this unit for language arts, utilize such materials as *Real Wild Rice* by David Martinson and stories, articles and poetry about wild rice. See Section VII, Resources, for references to consult.

B. To incorporate this unit into science studies, the following are activity suggestions:

1. Have the students study the growth patterns of wild rice (location, climate, size, length of harvesting season, water depth, soil, temperature).

2. Have the students make small scale canoes, following the slide presentation, *How to Make a Chippewa (Ojibwe) Birch Bark Canoe.*[2] Determine whether the canoes are watertight; what causes them to float and whether they are balanced. They could also experiment with the effect of weight inside the canoe.

C. Have the students research some of the tribes living in the Great Lakes region.

D. To incorporate this unit into social studies, the following are activity suggestions:

1. Identify how the following concepts relate to harvesting wild rice: buying and selling, supply and demand, food staple, climatic conditions, and seasonal employment.

2. Discuss the positive effects of a good rice crop.

3. Discuss the adverse effects of a poor rice crop.

4. Identify other seasonal activities as well as other harvesting processes.

VI. EVALUATION

A. Did the students correctly state that fall is the time of the year when wild rice is harvested?

B. Did the students accurately state that the Ojibwe word for wild rice is *mahnomen*?

C. Did the students identify Menominee as an Indian tribe whose name comes from wild rice?

[2]*How to Make a Chippewa (Ojibwe) Birch-Bark Canoe.* (17 slides). (St. Paul, Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society.)

D. Did the students correctly state that wild rice grows in shallow lakes and streams in the Great Lakes region in both the United States and Canada?

E. Did the students correctly state that wild rice is processed by hand or by machine?

F. Did the students correctly identify and describe the four steps in processing wild rice?

G. Did the students compare and contrast past and present methods of harvesting wild rice?

H. Did the students correctly state that Indian people are thankful for wild rice?

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DISCUSSION SHEET ONE: WILD RICE

Suggested Discussion Questions:

1. Where does wild rice grow?

2. Why do you think wild rice is important to Indian people?

3. Describe how lakes are reseeded.

4. How do environmental factors affect wild rice crops?

5. Why do you think this type of rice is called "wild"?

DISCUSSION SHEET TWO: DRYING THE WILD RICE

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DISCUSSION SHEET TWO: DRYING THE WILD RICE

Suggested Discussion Questions:

1. Describe what the person in the illustration is doing.

2. Why do you think the person is stirring the wild rice?

3. Describe the process of drying wild rice.

4. Why do you think the wild rice is dried?

DISCUSSION SHEET THREE: PARCHING THE WILD RICE

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DISCUSSION SHEET THREE: PARCHING THE WILD RICE

Suggested Discussion Questions:

1. Describe what the people in the illustration are doing.

2. Why is wild rice parched?

3. Describe the hand processing method of parching wild rice.

4. How do you think the person parching the wild rice knows when to stop?

5. How do you think the people in the illustration feel?

DISCUSSION SHEET FOUR: THRESHING THE WILD RICE

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DISCUSSION SHEET FOUR: THRESHING THE WILD RICE

Suggested Discussion Questions:

1. Describe what the person in the illustration is doing.

2. Why do you suppose threshing wild rice is sometimes called "jigging" and "dancing?"

3. Why do you think wild rice is threshed?

4. Identify other foods which have to be threshed.

5. What skills do you think a thresher would need?

DISCUSSION SHEET FIVE: WINNOWING THE WILD RICE

62

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DISCUSSION SHEET FIVE: WINNOWING THE WILD RICE

Suggested Discussion Questions:

1. Describe what the person in the illustration is doing.

2. Describe the process of winnowing wild rice.

3. Why is the wild rice winnowed?

4. What would the wild rice be like if it were not winnowed?

5. Have the students attempt to winnow, using an oblong pan or basket with bits of paper, macaroni, rice and other objects. Then have them make a list of things to remember about winnowing.

6. Suggest other ways to winnow.

WILD RICE RECIPES

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TO PREPARE WILD RICE

Wash the wild rice several times in cold water until the water is clear. Discard any chaff that rises to the surface.

Use approximately one cup of wild rice and one teaspoon of salt to one quart of water. Cook the rice in a kettle on medium heat until the rice is tender and the kernels open, appoximately thirty minutes.

The washed wild rice can also be covered with water and left to stand overnight. This will decrease the cooking time.

One cup of uncooked wild rice yields three to four cups of cooked rice.

PLEASE NOTE: The size and texture of rice kernels may increase or decrease cooking time.

BROCCOLI-WILD RICE CASSEROLE

1/2 small onion, chopped
1/2 cup celery
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese
1-1/2 cups cooked wild rice
1/2 package frozen chopped broccoli

Saute the onion and celery in cooking oil. Combine with the other ingredients. Place in buttered casserole dish and sprinkle with wheat germ. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

WILD RICE SALAD

2 cups cooked wild rice
4 hard boiled eggs (cut into wedges)
1/2 cup chopped celery
1/4 cup green pepper
1 tablespoon minced onion
1 cup mayonnaise
olives
pimento
salt and pepper to taste

Cool the wild rice then combine it with the other ingredients. Garnish with parsley.

STUFFED SQUASH

3 cups cooked wild rice
1 cup diced celery
2 teaspooons grated orange rind
3 teaspoons salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1 large acorn squash

Combine wild rice, celery, orange rind, salt and pepper. Cut squash in half, clean out seeds. Fill each squash half with rice mixture. Bake at 350°F for approximately one hour or until the squash is tender. The filling can be basted with one tablespoon of orange or apricot juice during cooking time.

WILD RICE PATTIES

3 cups cooked wild rice
1/2 cup grated sharp cheese
2 eggs
1/4 cup fine cracker crumbs
1 teaspoon salt
Dash of pepper

Combine the above ingredients and mix well. Form into firm cakes using additional cracker crumbs, as needed. Brown lightly in butter on a skillet.

The following recipes are reprinted courtesy of the Minneapolis Star Taste Section of October 6, 1976.[3]

WILD RICE SAUSAGE-SQUASH BAKE

2/3 cup wild rice
2 cups boiling water
8 oz. bulk pork sausage, crumbled
1/2 tsp. salt, optional
1 large acorn squash, quartered lengthwise and seeded

Pour the boiling water over the rice and let stand five minutes. Add crumbled sausage and salt and pour all into 7x11-inch shallow casserole. Place squash quarters on top of sausage and rice; cover tightly and bake at 350 degrees 1-1/2 to 1-3/4 hours. Serves 4.

WILD RICE, PORK AND APPLE SKILLET

6 pork chops, about 1-inch thick
Oil for frying, as needed
1 large onion, sliced into rings
1 cup wild rice
2-1/2 cups chicken bouillon
2 large red cooking apples, cored and sliced

Brown the pork chops on both sides in an electric skillet set at 375 degrees, using as little oil as necessary. Remove chops and sprinkle rice in pan. Arrange chops and onions over rice and pour chicken bouillon over this. Bring to a boil, cover and lower heat to maintain a slow simmer, about 200 degrees, for an hour. Add unpeeled apple slices, cover and simmer for 30 minutes longer or until apples, rice, and chops are tender. Serves 6.

WILD RICE MAPLE PUDDING

2 cups cooked wild rice
2 slices stale whole wheat bread, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
2 tbsp. melted butter or margarine
2 eggs, lightly beaten
6 tbsp. brown sugar
1/4 tsp. salt
2 cups milk
1/2 tsp. maple flavoring

Combine the rice and bread and drizzle with butter. Place in a 1-1/2-qt. buttered baking dish. Combine the eggs, sugar, salt, milk and maple flavoring and pour this over the rice and bread cubes. Set dish is a pan of hot water in the middle of the oven preheated to 350 degrees. Bake about 40 to 50 minutes, or until custard is set. Serve warm with whipped cream or ice cream. Serves 5 to 6.

WILD RICE ICE CREAM TOPPING

1 cup cooked wild rice
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup raisins
1/4 cup chopped walnuts

Combine wild rice, brown sugar, raisins, and walnuts. Makes 1-1/2 cups dessert topping. Will keep, covered and refrigerated, for several days. Spoon over ice cream or puddings.

(For a nutritious dessert, use only half of the sugar called for and serve the mixture in dessert dishes.)

[3]"No Need to Stew Over Wild Rice," *The Minneapolis Star Taste Section*, October 6, 1976, p. 60.